

Appl. No.: 10/540,812
Reply to Office Action of: 07/10/2006

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REMARKS

The claims have been amended above to overcome the examiner's objections.

Claims 1, 3 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kunishi et al. (US 5,306,168). Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Fukushima et al. (US 5,306,169). Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kunishi et al. (US 5,306,168) in view of Yokoyama et al. (US 6,347,950). The examiner is requested to reconsider these rejections.

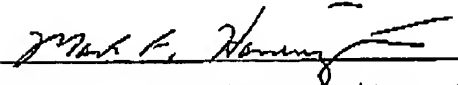
Claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice and its features have been added to claim 1. Claim 1 claims first stoppers and second stoppers. The protruding portion has the first stoppers. The first stoppers come into contact with the contact portions thereby stopping the protruding portion when the connector is inserted in the opposing connector. The contact portions have the second stoppers. The second stoppers come into contact with the housing thereby stopping the protruding portion when the connector is removed from the opposing connector. The features of claim 1 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable and should be allowed.

Though dependent claims 3-5 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 1. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

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For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the examiner is invited to call applicant's attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,


Mark F. Harrington (Reg. No. 31,686)

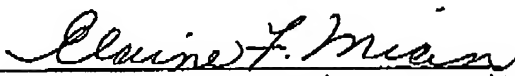
10/10/06
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